

Philippians 2:5

5 Let this **mind** be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Think Better Thoughts

The Shema.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Fast forward to when Jesus lived. One day, He was asked what the greatest commandment was and He replied by quoting the Shema.

Mark 12:30

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy **mind**, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Notice what Jesus did? He added mind to the list!

God wants to put your intellect and your creative thinking to use for His kingdom. God wants you to serve and love Him with your mind.

A mind's a terrible thing to waste!

I find it interesting that Jesus added that, but I think I know why.

Matthew 5:21-22a, 27-28

21 Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

In the Old Testament it was more about not **committing** sin, but in the New Testament, under the new covenant, if you even allow sinful, hateful or lustful **thoughts** in, you are in sin.

I think that's why Jesus added it.

It's important what goes on in your thoughts.

One of the main tactics of our enemy, the devil, is to get in our minds and mess up how we think.

If he can get in your mind and alter the way you think, he can mess up your whole life.

Mahatma Gandhi said this:

Thoughts become words, words become actions, actions become habits, habits form our character/values.

He said it well, but I think King Solomon said it better:

Proverbs 23:7a

7 For as he (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he:

Where a man's thoughts are, the man is soon to follow.

- It's similar to the principle we read about in Matthew 6:21. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." You can lead your **heart** by directing your **treasure**.
- You can literally direct the path of your life by taking control of your thoughts because "as a man thinks, so is he."
- Chocolate Sundae example. If you think about a chocolate sundae long enough, you will eventually find yourself in the Dairy Queen drive through, because "as a man thinks, so is he."
- Chocolate sundaes are pretty innocent, but there are things you can think about that can get you into a lot of trouble.

How we think and what we think about is extremely important!

Acts 26:2

2 I **think** myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

Paul was on trial, a dismal circumstance to say the least, yet he was happy. How? He **thought** himself happy.

It's so easy to think on negative things, but if you do you are leading your life in a direction you don't want to go! That's why Paul wrote:

Philippians 4:8

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think** on these things.

Think about **good** things, because "as a man thinks, so is he."

How we think and what we think about is extremely important, and the devil knows it!

He knows if he can shift your thoughts to evil thoughts, those thoughts will eventually become who you are.

- If he can get you thinking that there's something wrong with you, pretty soon suicide and self-mutilation becomes an option.
- If he can get you thinking about sex long enough, pretty soon you will be fornicating.
- If he can get you thinking about how that person at church did you wrong, pretty soon you will be wanting to quit church.
- If he can get you thinking about how your parent(s) did you wrong, pretty soon that relationship will be dysfunctional.

The devil doesn't take over our body's and make us physically do things. But he does infiltrate our thoughts because that's just as effective.

Paul knew this was how the devil worked, which is why he wrote this to the Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

**Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

So there *is* a battle to be fought, but it's not a physical fight, it's a spiritual battle and Paul is about to let us know what weapons we can use to fight it.

4 (For the **weapons** of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

- The ultimate goal and objective of this battle is to pull down strong holds.

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought** to the obedience of Christ;

- We learn from this verse that the devil fights us with thoughts and imaginations, and the way we fight back is by casting down those imaginations and bringing those thoughts into captivity before they run rampant through our mind. These are our weapons!
- The enemy fights us with our thoughts, and the way we fight back is by simply choosing not to think that way.

Have you ever heard the pick up line: You must be tired, because you've been running through my mind all day?

So many of us allow evil, sinful, or self-degrading thoughts to **run** through our minds. When we allow bad thoughts to stay in our minds, we give ground to the devil. But when we cast down and make captive those thoughts and refuse to think that way, we defeat the devil.

Some people think that they can't control their thoughts. While it is true you can't control when the thoughts come into your head, you **can** control whether you are going to dwell on them or not.

We can't control when a thought comes into our brain, but we can control whether or not it stays in our brain.

And when you refuse to think on things that are evil and choose to think on things that are godly, you get victory over the devil!

Ephesians 4:17-24

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their **mind**,

18 Having the **understanding** darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation (lifestyle) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Verse 23 is the bridge verse. We cant get from verse 22 to verse 24 until we have a verse 23 experience! We can't put off the old man and put on the new man until we have had a renewing in our minds.

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

If you would change the way you think, it would **transform** your life!

We need to stop letting the devil run our thoughts and we need to start thinking like God thinks.

How does God think? Read His Word.

The enemy would say your a failure, but God says:

Micah 7:8

8 Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.

The enemy would say you are defeated, but God says:

Romans 8:37

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

The enemy would say you are beyond reach, but God says:

Psalms 50:15

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

The enemy would say you can't do something for God, but God says:

Philippians 4:13

13 I can do all things through Christ[a] who strengthens me.

Who's report will you believe? I'm going to believe, and think upon, the report of the Lord!